

REMARKS:

In the foregoing amendments, claims 15-38 were canceled, and claims 39-59 were added to the application. Claims 1-15 were previously canceled. Accordingly, claims 39-59 are in the application for consideration by the examiner. The foregoing amendments are being made to clarify what was already implied in applicant's claims and these amendments are not narrowing amendments and are not being made for reasons substantially related to patentability presented.

The Official action set forth numerous objections to the claims on pages 2-7 of the Official action. A rejection of claims 18, 19, 25 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, was set forth on pages 7 and 8 of the Official action. While applicant does not agree with the position set forth in the objections to the claims or the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, applicant respectfully submits that new claims 39-59 overcome any objections to the claim set forth in the outstanding Office action and particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention within the meaning of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112. The new claims include the suggestions kindly set forth by the examiner in the outstanding Office action. The correspondence between the new claims and the previously presented claims is as follows:

<u>New</u>	<u>Old</u>
39	15
40	16
41	18
42	19
43	20
44	21
45	22
46	23
47	25
48	26
49	27
50	28
51	30
52	31
53	32
54	33
55	34
56	35
57	36
58	37
59	38

For the foregoing reasons, applicant respectfully requests that the examiner reconsider and withdraw all the objections to the claims and the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as set forth in the outstanding Office action.

The Official action set forth a single prior art rejection of applicant's claims. While only claim 15 was mentioned in the rejection, it appears that the Official action may have intended to reject all the pending claims (15, 16, 18-23, 25-28 and 30-38) under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 6,204,772 of DeMay *et al.* (DeMay). This rejection spans pages 8-22 of the Official action.

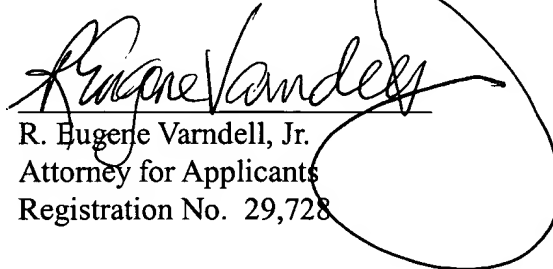
Applicant respectfully submits that DeMay is not a proper reference against any claims in the present application under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). The U.S. filing date of the present national phase application is the same as the international filing date of March 17, 2000, for international application No. PCT/JP00/01657. In addition, this application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 from prior Japanese application Nos. 072734/1999 and 072742/1999, both filed on March 17, 1999. This effective filing date of March 17, 1999, is prior to the filing date of DeMay, which is December 16, 1999. Applicant is attaching hereto verified English translations of the priority documents, Japanese patent application No. 072742/1999 filed on March 17, 1999, and Japanese patent application No. 072734/1999 filed on March 17, 1999. The invention defined in present claims 39-59 is supported under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112 in the aforesaid Japanese patent applications. Therefore, the effective filing date of the present application is March 17, 1999, which is prior to the filing date of DeMay. Thus, the teachings of DeMay are not available as a reference against the present claims within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Therefore, applicant respectfully requests that the examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims in this application over the teachings of DeMay.

For at least the foregoing reasons, a formal allowance of claims 39-59 is respectfully requested.

The foregoing is believed to be a complete and proper response to the Official action mailed May 22, 2006. While it is believed that all the claims in this application are in condition for allowance, should the examiner have any comments or questions, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned be telephoned at the below listed number to resolve any outstanding issues.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, applicant hereby petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee therefor, as well as any deficiency in the payment of the required fee(s) or credit any overpayment, to our deposit account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,  
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